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In Chirurgeon Browne's "Compleat Treatise of the Muscles," 1681, which is not mentioned by Frank or Choulant, these same plates appear, strangely metamorphosed. Dissected gentlemen, wearing wigs of the period, are placed like dancing statues on absurd pedestals, and one lacerated creature has been transferred from the bare ground to a bed.

Much graver omissions are inevitable in a book of such wide scope, but it is thankless to refer to them in view of all that the authors have accomplished. It is a pleasure to see a reproduction of Wirsung's very rare first picture of the pancreatic duct, even though it probably has suffered much in reduction and printing. This, we believe, is the only figure of an original plate illustrating an important anatomical discovery which the volume contains.

The three appendices introduced in this edition are a fragmentary treatment of Chinese anatomy by Choulant, an interesting treatise on sculpture and painting as modes of anatomical illustration by Drs. Garrison and Streeter, and ten pages by Garrison, chiefly an annotated list of books, concerning anatomical illustration since the time of Choulant.

The whole volume is designed as a memorial of Dr. Mortimer Frank, who died at the early age of forty-four—a kindly, modest and able student of medical history whose work is of permanent value.

F. T. LEWIS

*Observations on Living Gastropods of New England.* By EDWARD S. MORSE, Peabody Museum. Pp. 1-29, pls. I-IX.

There are so few papers describing and figuring even the external features of the animals of mollusks, that all students and lovers of this group will hail with pleasure the paper whose title is given above. It is a companion piece to the one published two years ago by the same author, "Observations on Living Lamelli-branches of New England." In the present paper 46 species are figured in 118 sketches gathered on 9 plates. The first 22 pages are given to a discussion of the anatomic structures figured, while the last 7 are devoted

to an arraignment of modern nomenclatorial methods.

There is only one criticism that we have found covering the first 22 pages and plates, in fact this has been discovered by Professor Morse himself, as stated in a letter to me by him. This concerns figure 18 which shows an appendage in *Aporrhais occidentalis*. This represents an abnormality and should have been eliminated or designated as such.

Some may criticize the doctor for retaining an ancient nomenclature and may even go so far as to say that had he spent as much time in revision as he did upon the preparation of pages 23 to 29 he might have saved some one else the task of bringing the names up to date and rendered his observations more readily available to the general public. I have gone over the revisional work and shall publish the results in the *Nautilus*. In so doing, I may say that I have been greatly aided in disposing of some of the questions of identity of West Atlantic with East Atlantic species by the anatomic data presented in this paper.

Finally, we would fail did we not remind Professor Morse that he was one of the pioneers who by his careful studies, so long ago, showed that some of the large groups then in use, were complexes requiring the splitting which he fearlessly bestowed upon them. He should not forget the shock delivered to no less a celebrity than the elder Agassiz when he pointed out that Brachiopods were not Mollusks, as heretofore held, but animals more nearly akin to certain worms. These, however, were conclusions based upon structural characters and merited that recognition and welcome which such discoveries will ever find accorded to them. The lamentable nomenclatorial changes are those which are occasioned by preoccupation. I have frequently wished that some organization could be prevailed upon to undertake the preparation of a card catalogue of scientific names, generic and specific, beginning with Linnæus, giving in addition to the name and citation of publication, the family to which a given genus belongs, and the type locality for each species. In the case of secondary combination, a cross reference card should be pre-

pared for filing under the proper places. Such a work carefully executed would eliminate at once almost all the changes in nomenclature due to priority only, the names, that seem to irritate most grievously the men who are not actually engaged in revisional work.

The reviser usually has only one aim, or should have only one aim in mind, and that is to achieve stability by applying the rules of the international code consistently, no matter how much he may dislike to do so. No nomenclatorial stability can be achieved if each of us follows an independent method. A catalogue of the kind above referred to would make a quick revision possible, the main points of which would stand for a long time to come, and the minor shift could easily be kept current by the small force that should prepare the cards for the new things published year by year. I wish to heartily recommend this undertaking to the National Research Council. I am sure that the whole zoological fraternity, yes, not only zoological but botanical fraternity, would be grateful for such a work.

It is to be hoped that Professor Morse will continue this work and will find time to give us the results of his efforts.

PAUL BARTSCH

### VENOMOUS SPIDERS

My attention having recently been called to the death of a man, apparently from the bite of a spider (which case will be described below), I have brought together some of the literature upon this much debated question, and I shall quote from several authorities upon the subject.

Comstock, in "The Spider Book," makes the following statements in discussing the venomous character of spider bites:

During my study of spiders I have collected thousands of specimens and have taken very many in my hand but have never been bitten by one (p. 213).

Several of the more prominent arachnologists, including Mr. Blackwall, of England, and Baron Walckenaer and M. Duges, of France, have made experiments to determine the effect on man of the

bite of spiders. Each of these experimenters caused himself to be bitten by spiders; and all agree that the effects of the bites did not differ materially from those of pricks made the same time with a needle (p. 214).

I have given considerable attention to this question with the result that I firmly believe that in the North at least there is no spider that is to be feared by man.

Although we have in the North no spider that is to be feared, it is quite possible that in the South it is different. I confess that I should not like to be bitten by one of the larger tarantulas of that region, although I know of no well-authenticated case of a person being bitten by one.

The spiders of the genus *Latrodectus*, of which we have a common representative in the South, are feared wherever they occur, and it is possible that they are more venomous than other spiders. . . .

This genus, as has been well stated by F. P. Cambridge, comprises those very interesting spiders which, under various local names, have been notorious in all ages and in all regions of the world where they occur on account of the reputed deadly nature of their bite. It may be added that this belief is not shared by students of spiders . . . (p. 357).

This species (*L. mactens*) is very common and widely distributed in the South. It is found under stones and pieces of wood on the ground, about stumps, in holes in the ground, and about out-buildings . . . (p. 358).

Although it is essentially a southern species, it occurs in Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Hampshire and doubtless other of the northern states. . . . It also occurs in California (p. 358).

An apparent inconsistency is seen in the above quotations. He states in one place "that in the north at least there is no spider that is to be feared by man." A little later he says:

Although it (*Latrodectes*) is essentially a southern species, it occurs in Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, and doubtless other of the northern states. . . .

Since he reports *Latrodectes* from Pennsylvania and New Hampshire it is obviously not an entirely southern species.

Long before the publication, in 1912, of "The Spider Book," in Vol. 1, 1889, of *Insect Life*, the editors, Riley and Howard, discussed in two articles, the question of spider bites.